is the parent application for the present continuation application, claims directed respectively to "structure for joining abutting ends of two webs of labels", "structure for supplying heat shrinkable labels" and a "container having sidewalls" were examined together in the same application. The Patent Office requires examination of all claims presented in an application where "serious burden" would not be imposed. MPEP §803. An assertion made in a continuation application that it would be burdensome to examine claims identified in multiple groups of claims is defective where claims in the same groupings were previously searched and examined in a related parent application.

Respectfully submitted,

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AMENDMENTS WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Claims:

1. (Amended) A label for product containers [structure for joining abutting ends of two webs of labels, each web having two ends, the structure] comprising:

first and second elongated webs of heat shrinkable material;

a splice member adapted to overlap a terminal end portion of each of the webs with the webs arranged in an abutting relationship [for overlapping the abutting ends of the label webs], the splice member [comprising] comprised substantially of [a] heat shrinkable material; and

an adhesive coating on a surface of the splice member for securing the splice member to each of the first and second [two ends of the label] webs.

2. (Amended) The [structure] label according to claim 1, wherein the [heat shrinkable material of the] splice member is transparent.

3. (Amended) The [structure] label according to claim 1, wherein the [heat shrinkable material of the] splice member comprises a polyethylene film.

4. (Amended) The [structure] label according to claim 1, wherein the label webs are from two separate label rolls.

5. (Amended) A [structure for supplying] heat shrinkable [labels to a labeling machine] label for product containers comprising:

[(a)] at least two elongated webs of a heat shrinkable laminate, each web provided with a continuous series of printed labels thereon, the labels positioned end to end along each web, each web having opposite side edges defining a width, a leading end and a trailing end; and

[(b) a] at least one elongated, clear, heat shrinkable splice tape[, the splice tape] having [a] top and [a] bottom surfaces[,] and an adhesive on the bottom surface [of the splice

tape], the adhesive adhering the splice tape to a portion of one web adjacent the leading end [of one web] and to a portion of another web adjacent the trailing end [of another web] such that the splice tape extends transversely to the webs across a majority of the width defined by the webs to [such that they] form a continuous web,

each of the [laminate material of the] webs and the at least one [material of the] splice tape having bi-directional shrinkage characteristics selected to provide longitudinal and lateral shrinkage percentages for the splice tape that are substantially equal to respective lateral and longitudinal shrinkage percentages for the webs [substantially equivalent shrinkage rates] such that, upon application of heat to a label and splice tape [within the labeling machine], the label shrinks along with the splice tape without causing substantial distortion to the printing on the label.

6. (Amended) The [structure] heat shrinkable container label according to claim 5 wherein the splice tape is adhered to the ends of the webs over the printing thereon.

7. (Amended) The [structure] heat shrinkable container label according to claim 5 wherein the laminate material of the webs comprises a polypropylene film.

8. (Amended) [A structure] The heat shrinkable container label according to [as claimed in] claim 5, wherein each of the webs comprises a laminate of two plies of polypropylene film.

9. (Amended) The [structure] heat shrinkable container label according to claim 5 wherein the material of the splice tape comprises a polyethylene film.

10. (Amended) [A structure] The heat shrinkable container label according to [as claimed in] claim 9 wherein each of the webs comprises a laminate of a polypropylene film.

11. (Amended) The [structure] heat shrinkable container label according to claim 5 wherein each web is provided on a separate roll.

12. (Amended) A method of labeling a product container [for joining ends of two webs of labels each having a leading end and a trailing end to form a continuous web,] comprising the steps of:

[a.] providing first and second elongated webs of heat shrinkable label material each having opposite sides defining a width, a leading end and an opposite trailing end;

[b.] providing a heat shrinkable splice tape [having at least one layer of a heat shrinkable material defining a surface and a] including an [coating of] adhesive on [the] a surface defined by the splice tape;

[c.] aligning the trailing end of the first web with the leading end of the second web such that the ends abut one another;

[d.] adhering the splice tape to [the] a portion of the first web adjacent the trailing end and to a portion of the second web adjacent the leading end to extend transversely to the webs across a majority of the width defined by the webs [aligned ends of the two webs] so as to form a continuous web.

13. (Amended) The method according to claim 12, wherein the [at least one layer of the] splice tape is transparent.

14. (Amended) The method according to claim 12, wherein [the label material of] each of the provided webs comprises:

[a.] a first laminate of heat shrinkable material;

[b.] an adhesive in contact with the first laminate;

[c.] ink in contact with the adhesive; and

[d.] a second laminate of heat shrinkable material in contact with said ink, the first and second laminates having substantially equivalent shrinkage [rates] characteristics.

15. (Amended) The method according to claim 14, wherein the [material of the] splice tape and each of the laminates of the webs has [a] bi-directional shrinkage characteristics selected to provide longitudinal and lateral shrinkage percentages for the splice tape that are substantially [equivalent] equal to respective lateral and longitudinal shrinkage [rate] percentages for [as the first and second laminate of] the webs.

18. (Amended) A label for a container [having sidewalls, a top surface and a bottom surface,] comprising:

first and second web segments of heat shrinkable [label] material [having first and second segments wrapped around the periphery of the container, and], each [label] web segment having [a first and second end] opposite first and second end edges defining a length therebetween [and an inside and outside surface,];

[the first end of the first label segment secured to the sidewall of the container, the first label segment wrapped around a first portion of the periphery of the container ,]

the second end edge of the first [label] web segment juxtaposed to and aligned with the first end edge of the second [label] web segment; and

a splice tape including a heat shrinkable portion defining a surface [having at least one layer of a heat shrinkable material and a layer] and a coating of an adhesive on the surface, the splice tape overlapping a portion of each of the first and second web segments adjacent the aligned end edges, the adhesive [layer] coating of the splice tape securing the splice tape to [joining the juxtaposed and aligned ends of] the first and second [label] web segments to form a single continuous web,

the length of the first and second web segments selected to provide a heat shrinkable container label having a closed cross section of a predetermined perimeter length when a portion of the first web segment adjacent its first end edge is secured to a portion of the second web segment adjacent its second end edge [second label segment wrapped around a second portion of the container periphery,

the second end of the second label segment secured to the first end of the first label segment,

wherein the splice tape and label have been heat shrunk onto the container].

19. (Amended) The container label according to claim 18 wherein each of the web segments defines a first surface and an opposite second surface and wherein the splice tape is [positioned on the outside] secured to the first surface of the [label] web segments.

20. (Amended) The container label according to claim 18 wherein each of the web segments defines a first surface and an opposite second surface and wherein the splice tape is [positioned on the inner surfaces] secured to the second surface of the [label] web segments.

21. (Amended) A label for a product container [splice tape for joining abutting ends of two webs of heat shrinkable labels, each web having two ends, the splice tape] comprising:

first and second elongated label webs each having a terminal end portion;

a splice tape comprised substantially of heat shrinkable material, the splice tape adapted to overlap a terminal end portion of each of the first and second webs with the webs arranged in an abutting relationship [at least one layer of a heat shrinkable material for overlapping the abutting ends of the two label webs]; and

an adhesive layer for securing the splice tape to the terminal end portions of the first and second [two ends of the label] webs.

22. (Amended) A [supply of heat] heat shrinkable label for a container [labels for a labeling machine] comprising:

[(a)] at least two elongated webs [of] each including a heat shrinkable laminate, each web having opposite side edges defining a [having a longitudinal length and a lateral] width and a continuous series of printed labels thereon, the labels positioned end to end longitudinally along [the length of] each web, each web having a leading end portion and a trailing end portion; [and]

[(b) a] an elongated splice tape having a [longitudinal] length and opposite side edges defining a [lateral] width and comprised substantially of [comprising at least one layer of a] heat shrinkable material [defining a surface,]; and

[the splice tape further comprising] an adhesive coating on [the] a surface defined by the splice tape [of the at least one layer of heat shrinkable material], the adhesive coating securing the splice tape to the leading end portion of one web and to the trailing end portion of another web such that the splice tape extends [extending] transversely to [with respect to the length of] the webs[, the splice tape adhered to the leading end of one web and to the trailing end

of another web] across a majority of the width of the webs such that [the webs form] a continuous web is formed.

23. (Amended) The heat shrinkable label [supply] according to claim [23] 22 wherein the webs and the splice tape have longitudinal and lateral shrinkage [rates] characteristics selected to provide [the] longitudinal and lateral shrinkage percentages for [rate of] the splice tape [begin] that are substantially equal to [the] respective lateral and longitudinal shrinkage percentages for [rate of] the webs [and the lateral shrinkage rate of the splice tape being substantially equal to the longitudinal shrinkage rate of the webs] such that, upon application of heat to the splice tape and adjacent portions of the webs [a label from the continuous web], printing distortion [to the printing on the label caused by] due to differential shrinkage between the splice tape and the adjacent portions of the webs [label] will be substantially limited.